

other Telemedicine and Distance Learning projects throughout the Bell Atlantic territory.

In 1995, Andy was promoted to Director of Federal Relations for Bell Atlantic and continued to work in Government Affairs after Bell Atlantic merged with NYNEX to become part of the new Bell Atlantic. A later merger with GTE created Verizon in 2000, and later mergers with MCI and the purchase of Vodafone's interest in VerizonWireless created the current Verizon where Andy is finishing his distinguished career.

He has also served as Chairman and in a leadership capacity with Signal Credit Union for many years. Andy has continued to focus on health care and telemedicine policy but also worked on labor, immigration, environment, and other issues. He is well known and admired for his expertise, effectiveness, friendliness, and generosity as well as his ability to forge effective coalitions with diverse memberships. Additionally, he is a proud member of "Red Sox Nation" and a long-time fan of the New England Patriots.

Andy is a long-time resident of Maryland and resides in Adamstown with his wife, Linda. Together they have two adult children, Cory and Elise. In retirement, Andy and Linda are looking forward to spending time at their homes in Massachusetts and Maryland.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MS. VIRGINIA VEAL

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the 100th Birthday of Ms. Virginia Inez Bates Veal on December 17, 2015. Born on December 17, 1915, Ms. Veal has called Jacksonville, Florida home since her family moved from Bartow, Florida in 1918 when she was just three years old.

Virginia's life reads right out of the pages of a Jacksonville history book. As a young girl, she survived the Spanish Flu Epidemic that ran rampant through Florida in 1918. Her family endured the difficulties of the Great Depression in the late 1920's. And in 1934 Virginia graduated from Jacksonville's second oldest high school, and also my alma mater, Robert E. Lee High School.

After graduation, Virginia began working at Furchgott's, a local department store, in the Ladies Fine Wear section. After a 20 year career she retired as the Department Manager. During this time, Virginia raised two sons, Lamar Jr. and Lewis, in Jacksonville's well known preservation area of Murray Hill. Her two sons, also graduates of Robert E. Lee High School, went on to college and graduated from the University of Florida.

Virginia was married for almost 58 years to Mr. Prentice Veal. Mr. Veal managed and owned several dry cleaning plants around Jacksonville and Orange Park, Florida. Virginia today still enjoys cooking, gardening, visiting with family and friends, and is very active in her ladies' circle and Sunday school class at Riverside Park United Methodist Church.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in wishing Jacksonville native, Ms. Virginia Veal, a very special happy 100th birthday.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JORDAN SMITH

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Harlan County's own Jordan Smith for winning Season 9 of The Voice, NBC's nationwide vocal competition.

Jordan's superior talent impressed all four superstar judges during the blind auditions, igniting a competition for Jordan's team choice. From the moment the world heard Jordan's vocal debut, his powerful gift was undeniable. However, it was in the conversations following his performance that Jordan shared insight to his outstanding character, his determination and humility, as well as his faith in God. His courage and boldness has inspired people across the country, and especially in the hills of Eastern Kentucky. Coach Adam Levine said it best, noting Jordan as "the most important person that's ever been on this show."

Jordan has received applause and the utmost praise from some of the most talented, award-winning artists across the nation, affirming that his vocal gymnastics have impressed the best of the best artists. Coach Pharrell Williams even expressed to Jordan, "God has signed your voice." Jordan quickly became more than a singer in a televised competition, but arose as a leader and inspiration during a critical time in our nation. The celebration of Jordan's personal victory comes during a time when hope is desperately needed in his hometown and across the country. With the looming threat of terrorism at an all-time high and as Jordan's hometown region suffers from devastating job losses in the coal industry, he chose encouraging songs of hope and faith to transcend shared feelings of despair and fear. Additionally, Jordan's performances shined a spotlight on the compassionate and talented people of Harlan County, evoking much-needed positive news stories about our region.

It is his courage of conviction that makes Jordan so much more than a vocalist on stage. He is a leader of hope and faith for our nation and the people of Eastern Kentucky are deeply proud of his accomplishments thus far.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Jordan Smith on his monumental win on The Voice. I look forward to following the career of another talented artist from Eastern Kentucky.

TRIBUTE TO JIM AND JOLENE NELSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Jim and Jolene Nelson of Anita, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary. They were married on November 20, 1960, at the Lutheran Church in Greenfield, Iowa.

Jim and Jolene's lifelong commitment to each other, their daughter, Janet, and their

granddaughter, Emily, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Nelsons that make me proud to represent our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 55th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

FIRST RESPONDERS PASSPORT ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3750, the "First Responders Passport Act of 2015."

I thank Representative DARRELL ISSA and the House Foreign Affairs Committee Leadership, Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for shepherding this legislation along.

This bill amends the Passport Act of June 4, 1920 to waive passport fees for an individual who has contracted with the U.S. government, including a volunteer, to aid a foreign country suffering from a qualifying natural disaster.

As the African proverb goes, "in moments of crisis, the wise build bridges—" this is what our first responders do: they build bridges for those caught in natural disasters.

In today's world fraught with natural disasters from Storm Desert that our friends in the U.K. are facing to cyclones, hurricanes and tornadoes across the globe, more than ever, it is very important that we build bridges by equipping our first responders dedicated to aiding countries across the globe suffering from natural disasters.

According to scientists, the first half of this decade featured deadly climate-related disasters, among them the great floods in Thailand in 2011, Hurricane Sandy in the United States in 2012, and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013.

Moreover, the year 2014 was the earth's warmest in 134 years of recorded history, and 2015 could well turn out to be even hotter.

According to some scientists, it is difficult to not draw a nexus between climate change and some of the natural disasters we have suffered on planet earth in this decade alone.

In the end, climate related and natural disasters have cost the world a lot in lives as well as economically.

In fact, according to the World Meteorological Organization, 1,300 climate-related natural disasters have been recorded in Africa between 1970 to 2012.

In this time frame, these natural disasters in Africa have caused the loss of 700,000 lives and caused economic damage worth U.S. \$26 billion.

Experts inform us that in 2012 there were 99 natural disasters in Africa—twice the long-term average.

The passage of H.R. 3750 is very timely, especially in light of recent talks in Le Bourget, France at the Conference of Parties (COP 21), with the objective of achieving a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world.

In other words, the conveners at COP 21 seek to protect our precious earth, address the nexus between our protection of precious earth to some of the natural disasters we are suffering and reach a consensus on how we leave our children their inheritance of the earth better than we found it.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of first responders heed the call during natural disasters to protect and serve the people of planet earth who find themselves at the mercy of mother-nature during natural disasters.

I hold in high regard the service of our first responders: firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency response technicians, nurses, emergency room doctors, and the dozens of other professionals and volunteers who are the ultimate public servants.

From Katrina to earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal, time and time again, first responders have put their lives and comfort on the line in order to rescue survivors, care for those in need, and prevent the further loss of life.

H.R. 3750 is very critical because it aims to reduce personal costs borne by first responders—people who help others in their time of need.

According to the Global Increase in Climate-Related Disasters, we face more frequent floods, storms, heat waves, and droughts which are connected to greater extremes in temperatures and rainfall.

Moreover, recent warnings by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, inform us that the global temperature is already halfway to the “two degree warming” threshold for limiting catastrophic climatic impacts.

As the evidence shows, unequivocally, the dedication of first responders is an integral part of bringing relief to parts of the world where natural disasters have struck.

I support this legislation and hope that as we move forward, we continue to engage in dialogue about the fact that:

Climate impacts are not just concerns for the distant future, but are already being felt by us and our children;

All countries, rich and poor are casualties of natural disaster, but the death toll is higher among the poor who are more likely to live in harm's way, such as in flood-prone areas; and

It is important to create structures that facilitate the swift deployment of first responders to people in dire need of disaster relief.

**HONORING MS. JENNIFER SOLDATI
ON THE OCCASION OF HER
RETIREMENT FROM GREATER
SOMERSWORTH CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AFTER NINE AND A
HALF YEARS AS EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

HON. FRANK C. GUINTA

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my congratulations to Ms. Jennifer Soldati on her retirement after more than nine years as Executive Director of the Greater Somersworth Chamber of Commerce, and thank her for the outstanding work she did during her career.

Throughout her time at the Chamber, Ms. Soldati fought for the interests of both large

and small businesses, and focused on promoting growth throughout the region. During her tenure with the City Council, she played a critical role in completing multiple renovation projects in downtown Somersworth, and it's clear that her knowledge, compassion and leadership will be greatly missed.

It is with great admiration that I congratulate Ms. Jennifer Soldati on her retirement, and wish her the best on all future endeavors.

**HONORING FALLEN CHICAGO
FIREFIGHTER DANIEL CAPUANO**

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chicago Firefighter Daniel Capuano, who tragically lost his life while battling a blaze on Chicago's South Side on December 14.

Daniel Capuano began his career as a firefighter and paramedic in Lemont, Illinois, in 1997. During his time in Lemont he helped save the life of a caddy who had a heart attack while working at the Cog Hill Golf Course. In 2001, Capuano joined the Chicago Fire Department where he served for 15 years. Throughout his career, he was known for going above and beyond the call of duty. He was always working on making himself a better firefighter, including constantly taking outside classes to learn the latest and most effective firefighting techniques. Capuano was known for his commitment to safety and skill as a firefighter as he served as a training supervisor, ensuring that trainees navigated controlled burns safely.

A member of Tower Ladder 34, Daniel Capuano leaves behind his wife Julie—a Chicago Public Schools teacher—and three children, Amanda, Andrew, and Nick. Capuano was known for being a loving father who enjoyed watching his children play hockey. He was a constant presence at their games, only missing when he was at work. Capuano also assisted his children's team by helping out as the club manager and maintained a training building.

Today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Chicago Firefighter Daniel Capuano. A dedicated father, husband and firefighter, he was an example of the finest that Chicago has to offer. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering and honoring the life of Daniel Capuano and extending condolences to his family.

**CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 644,
TRADE FACILITATION AND
TRADE ENFORCEMENT ACT OF
2015**

SPEECH OF

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 11, 2015

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act. This bill is an improvement on the previous version that I opposed in June.

For the past several years I have had many conversations with the people of Northwest Oregon about growing jobs and increasing exports. I've heard from workers, business owners, environmentalists, and others about the importance of enforcing and strengthening our existing trade laws and agreements. Strong trade facilitation and enforcement will keep other nations accountable for the labor and environmental standards we set and give the United States the ability to take swift action against those who seek to engage in unscrupulous trade practices.

The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act earned my support because it includes provisions that are important for my constituents and for employers in Oregon, and because it provides resources and tools to take action against trade cheats.

This bill incorporates the ENFORCE Act to require quick action on allegations of evasion of duties, dumping, and improper subsidies. A special enforcement fund would provide up to \$30 million each year dedicated to enforcing trade agreements and making sure trading partners meet their commitments.

It permanently establishes the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center to pursue across-agency enforcement of domestic trade rights and trade laws. There are also strong provisions to put an end to importation of products made by child and forced labor.

Oregon receives funding through the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) grant program to help small businesses find new markets for their products and boost job growth. This legislation reauthorizes STEP through 2020 and increases its funding to expand small business exports.

The Pacific Northwest is known for its great outdoors and recreational opportunities in the mountains, forests, beaches, rivers, and on the coast. Recreational outdoor businesses thrive in our region, marketing outdoorwear and active wear to sporting enthusiasts around the world. This legislation includes provisions that will make these products more competitive and reverse a scheduled increase in tariffs for small and medium-sized outdoor industry businesses.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, this is not a perfect bill, but it is a bipartisan compromise. On the heels of the historic Paris Climate Agreement, our nation will continue to lead the world in addressing climate change; the language in this legislation will not change that.

The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act is a step forward and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to ensure that our nation has strong enforcement mechanisms to ensure our employers and workers can compete on a level playing field in the global economy.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTINE ROST

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Christine Rost of Hamburg, Iowa, for being selected to serve on the 2015–16 Region 17 4-H Youth Leadership Council. Region 17 includes Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, and